



Opening Doors

Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness :: 2010

Mission: End Homelessness For Veterans and their Families

**Plenary Address
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
June 7, 2011**





Sacred Trust

“We have a sacred trust with those who wear the uniform of the United States of America. It's a commitment that begins at enlistment, and it must never end. But we know that for too long, we've fallen short of meeting that commitment. Too many wounded warriors go without the care that they need. Too many veterans don't receive the support that they've earned. Too many who once wore our nation's uniform now sleep in our nation's streets.”

- President Barack Obama



Opening Doors

- Four goals
 - Finish the job of ending **chronic homelessness** by 2015
 - Prevent and end homelessness among **Veterans** by 2015
 - Prevent and end homelessness among **families, youth, and children** by 2020
 - Set a path to ending all types of homelessness



Opening Doors

- Five themes
 - Increase leadership, collaboration, and civic engagement
 - Increase access to stable and affordable housing
 - Increase economic security
 - Improve health and stability
 - Retool the homeless crisis response system



Implementation

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

- Martin Luther King Jr.



Implementation

- Unprecedented **collaboration** and interagency approaches
- Better data and adoption of **best practices**
- Increased focus on **female Veterans** and their families
- Breakdown barriers to **mainstream** programs
- Prevention pilot to understand the needs of **OEF/OIF** Veterans



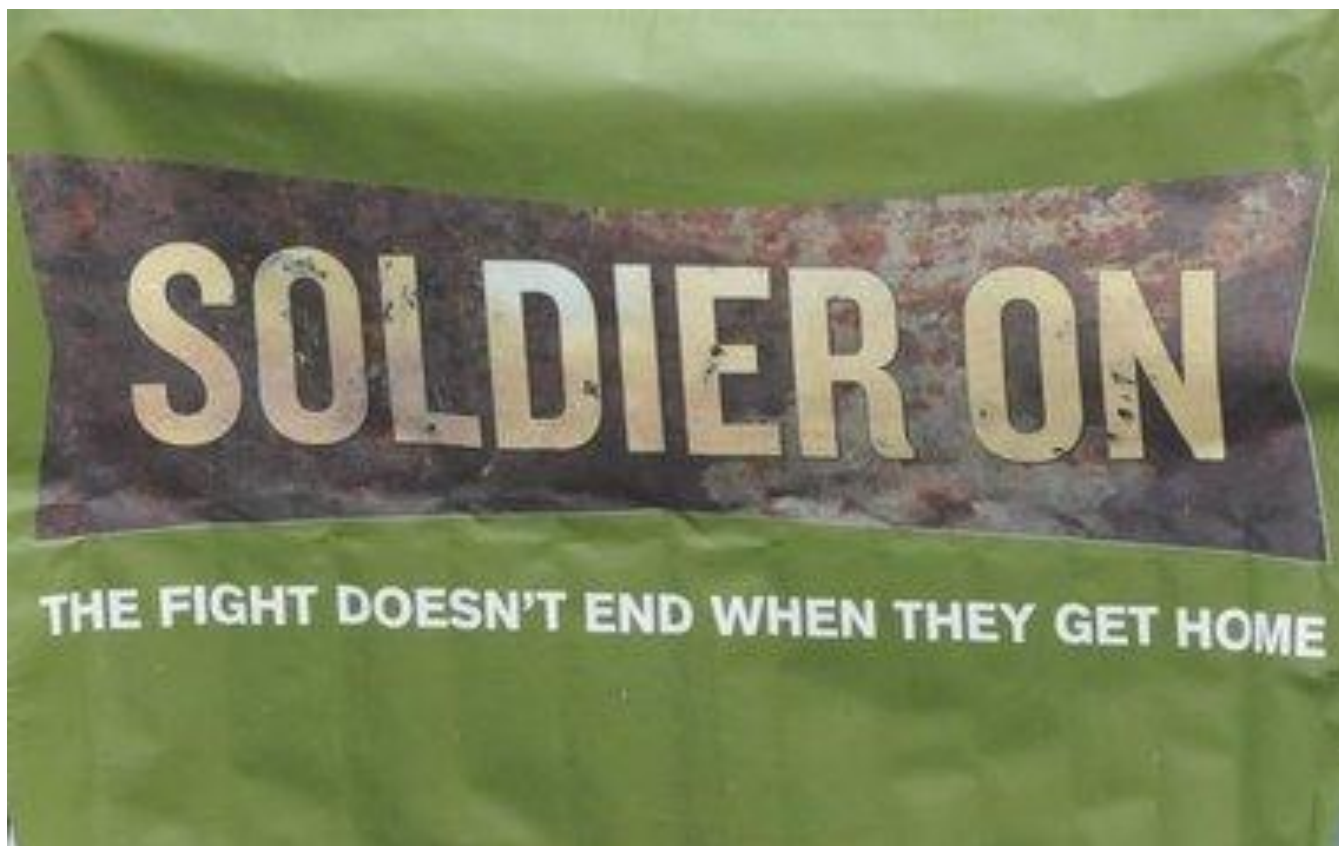
Implementation



Prevent and end homelessness
among **Veterans** by **2015**



Best Practices





Housing First

“Some people think when you give housing away that you’re actually enabling people as opposed to helping them get better.

Our experience has been that offer of housing first, and then treatment, actually has more effective results in reducing addiction and mental health symptoms, than trying to do it the other way.

The other way works for some people, but it hasn’t worked for the people who are chronically homeless.”

- Sam Tsemberis, PhD
Founder, Pathways to Housing



Housing First

- Housing is essential for recovery and wellness
- Individualized services that begin “where the Veteran is at”
- Better outcomes
 - Demonstrated reductions in days of homelessness
 - Reduces recidivism
 - Cost-effective



Housing First





Collaboration is key

“Well-intended people who lack synergy can fall short of their goals. It’s happened before. I encourage, and I’m committed to establishing an overarching national strategy that accommodates a nesting of each of our coordinated plans into ours, so that at each tier of collaboration, we support the achievement of your ultimate goals at the local level.”

- VA Secretary Eric Shinseki



Collaboration is key

- Break down silos at the federal, regional, state, and local levels
- All key players to the table –
 - Healthcare and service providers
 - Ten Year Plan and Continuum of Care leaders
 - State Interagency councils
 - VA, HUD, and other federal agencies
 - Public housing agencies and other housing providers
 - State and local government officials,
 - The faith based community and philanthropy



Working together – 100,000 Homes Campaign





Have we made progress?

- Did your community get a better count of homeless Veterans during the January 2011 PIT Count?
- Is your community rapidly returning more homeless Veterans to housing?
- Are Veterans who have been homeless the longest prioritized for housing and services?
- Do you participate in your community's Continuum of Care and Ten Year Planning process?
- Is outreach occurring in all community emergency shelters to identify homeless Veterans and connect them to the services they need and want?



Have we made progress?

- Has your program adopted a “readiness to change” model that meet people where they are?
- Have you ensured that homeless Veterans who are most vulnerable are accepted into your programs?
- Are you tracking your program’s success at getting all those admitted to your program into permanent housing?
- Do your housing outcomes meet or exceed other programs?



Have we made progress?

- Is your program connecting Veterans and their family members who aren't eligible for VA medical care to community providers and Medicaid?
- Has your program identified the opportunities that health reform and Medicaid expansion presents? Do you have a clear strategy to take advantage of these opportunities?
- Is your program participating in the local HMIS? Are you using data to improve your programs?



Call to Action

- Align with *Opening Doors*
- Set targets and measure results
- Act strategically
- Partner



Working Together

We can end Veterans homelessness





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